

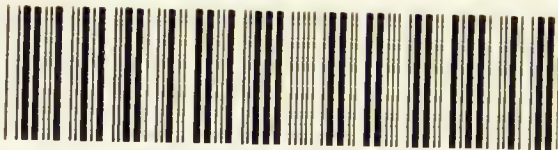
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THE STUDENT  
AND THE  
BODY-SNATCHER.





THE STUDENT  
AND THE  
BODY-SNATCHER  
AND OTHER TRIFLES.

BY  
ROBINSON K. LEATHER  
AND  
RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

*nugas agimus.*

LONDON:  
ELKIN MATHEWS,  
AT THE SIGN OF THE BODLEY HEAD,  
IN VIGO STREET, W.  
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## THE STUDENT AND THE BODY-SNATCHER.

“This poor thing a scholar? ’las he’s lunatic.”—FORD.

THERE was once a student living in Northumberland, in a remote village, who had no faith in God. He lived under the thatch at the middle of the village street, opposite the rectory, and on Sunday mornings he used to watch the rector walk out of his gate; Bible in hand, and then he would sit down to his own books.

One Sunday a good old woman brought him a Bible, saying that it would do him good; but he opened it quickly and she read where he pointed with his finger,

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"Wisdom is better to be desired than rubies," and again he took the book and opened and pointed, and this time she read, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!" This shocked the old woman very much.

One day a neighbour walked into his attic—for some thought that the student was crazy, and some that he had a devil, and this good person had determined he would just go and see what was the real truth. The first thing he saw on entering was set above the mantleshef. It was a skull.

"Why do you set a skull by your bedside?" he asked.

"To keep before me that life is short and to give edge and force to my enjoyment," replied the student.

Then this good man went back to his friends, and said "He has a devil."

Then another went in and seeing the skull he was scandalized and asked, "Is it not very hateful to you to have such an

ugly companion with you always?"

"On the contrary," replied the student, "I spend many a pleasant hour after dark smoking my pipe and wondering of the thoughts the brain had which was once lodged within those bone walls."

"Bone walls! dear me!" said this neighbour, and he went back to the others, and said, "The fellow is crazy."

Now there lived on the next floor below the student a body-snatcher, and it was from him that the student had bought the skull in change for one gold guinea. The body-snatcher was a very industrious man, but his calling made him unpopular. One night the student came downstairs and entered the body-snatcher's apartment. "What kind of man was he" he asked "whose skull you sold me?"

"Don't know" said the snatcher.

"Well," said the student, "I have studied him so long that I have in a way brought him back to life, and piece by piece I have got to know his history."



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"Hm!" said the body-snatcher.

"I shouldn't so much mind," went on the student "if he kept his history to himself, but somehow he has got into my brain, and, as (according to my conviction) he was a criminal and spent his last days in a condemned cell, and ended them on the gallows, I find it very tiresome to have about me these gloomy and vulgar associations."

"Get you another," observed the snatcher.

But the student had no sympathy for the professional enthusiasm of the body-snatcher, and thinking him a dull vulgar fellow went upstairs again to his books.

Next time the body-snatcher came upstairs according to habit, the student bolted the door and told him he would have no more to do with him.

"Ah," said the body-snatcher, and walked down again to his studio.

One night about a month after this, the full moon was looking into the attic

under the thatch. The old woman was passing down the street with the Bible in her hand, the same Bible she had shewn to the student. She looked up, and saw something dark hanging in the window. She stopped and looked again more closely. Then she went round to the neighbours, and they all came in a body to the house at which the student lived. The rector met them at the rectory gate opposite, and the body-snatcher joined them as they passed the second storey. As they entered the student's door a large dark thing with great wings noiselessly passed through the window and over the tops of the houses out of sight. A moment afterwards they saw the student hanging rigidly from the cross beam in the roof.

‘Dead!’

‘Crazy!’

‘Possessed!’

‘God forgive him!’ said the doctor, the two neighbours and the old woman all at once.

“He will have no more to do with me,” mused the body-snatcher, repeating the last words the student had spoken to him. Before going the rector searched for the student’s books, but they were nowhere to be seen,—only a white pyramid of ash on the hearthstone.

The student was buried the next day outside the churchyard, and for the space of nine days he was the talk of the village and surrounding country. But after a while everyone had forgotten him except the old woman, who, Bible in hand, would still linger as she passed his grave by the road side, and in spite of her strong protestant convictions, could only with difficulty refrain from uttering a prayer for his forgiveness.

But the student was not there; for on the very night after the interment, the body-snatcher had come round to the grave with spade and pick. “A man must live” he said to himself, as he shouldered the corpse.

## INDIGESTION.

WHETHER it was the beastly cooking at that place, or their coffee, or that infernal cigar, or my wife's relations, whatever it was, I felt what is generally known as "—— bad." So I sought out a solitary-looking carriage where I could sit alone and glare at the universe. Of course someone else must get in to disturb me, a brisk florid fellow who seemed inclined to talk, so I tried another carriage. As the train started almost immediately I was all right this time. The thought gave a momentary glow of satisfaction, and then went out—like a fusee. The sky was as sulky as could be, the country as stupid, the

carriage smelt stale, and it was too cold to open the window. I grinned with a bilious misery—a sort of “never you mind, roll on” feeling—and being a bit of a literary person, my wretchedness happened to recall Mr. Stevenson’s Scots poem of *The Blast*, the first verse of which I involuntarily said over in my mind with a grim satisfaction. Do you know it?

“It’s rainin! Weet’s the gairden sod,  
 Weet the lang roads whaur gangrels plod—  
 A maist unceevil thing o’ God  
     In mid July—  
 If ye’ll just curse the sneckdraw dod!  
     An’ sae wull I!”

Being alone, I put in the interjection by lifting up my legs and letting them down with a hearty kick into the corner seat facing me.

“Excuse me, Sir!” exclaimed an angry voice.

But I was alone! Ah, that was it, that’s just what troubled me. You can work out my feelings for yourself. I drew my boots back pretty sharp you may be sure, and sat as if I had just had a good blow in the

face. So soon as I felt I could move, I cautiously moved my right hand, for no reason that I know of, except perhaps to see how it worked, then I ventured to move my right leg, and at last I dared to unglue my head from the back of the carriage and look towards the window, but there was no one there either. Of course not! there was no one but me in the carriage—it was all some odd fancy. I shook myself and tried to smile—with an eye towards *that* corner. Bye and bye I grew bolder, it was a fancy of indigestion—that beastly cooking, of course, no more “golden grids” for me, the coffee too I expect, and certainly that cigar. The wife’s relations couldn’t well be to blame—at least *directly*. During these cogitations I was growing bolder and bolder, so bold that at last I determined to put the matter to a further test. In spite of my philosophising it took some tightening of muscles before I dared venture, and I don’t think I am a bigger coward than most

people—than you, for instance. At last up went my legs, rather as if they were being craned up, I fancy. I kept them hovering a moment, and then, not quite so heavily though, let them down into the doubtful corner. Great heaven! the voice again—“‘Zounds, sir! what *do* you mean? Kicking me in the stomach in that way. I shall certainly call the guard at the next station and have you removed. I never heard anything like it in all my life!” And so on. I sat with dropped jaw, frantically struggling to speak or do something or other, but in vain, like one in a nightmare—and as my starting eyes glared at the upholstering opposite, why! if the form of a man, a brisk—florid—elderly gentleman wasn’t growing there—the very man I had left the other carriage to avoid!

His face seemed just changing an irate glare into a smile of huge amusement, which exploded in a hearty laugh as he held out his hand, with—

“Forgive me, Sir! I didn’t mean to



frighten you so, but I couldn't resist it. I saw you wanted to avoid me in that carriage a few minutes ago—you remember?—so I thought I'd pay you out. You must know that I am traveller for a new soap—Mottle's 'Invisible,' invaluable to criminals, third persons, eavesdroppers and all persons fleeing from justice. Do you understand now? Shall I give you a card? But here we are!"

Our train was at that moment steaming into the station, and my odd companion disappeared into vacancy again, leaving me to quit the carriage alone. I watched the porter coming along shutting the doors, he shut *that* door too, but passed on to the next without comment; and I—now what would you have done under the circumstances?

## THE OLD MAN AND THE APPLE- WOMAN.

“**Y**OU tell me,” said the old man,  
“that he takes more than he pays  
for, I tell you that this is impossible.”

“Anyhow,” said the apple-woman, “he  
has given me a penny short, I hope the  
apple will werrit his inside, that I do.”

“Amen!” said the clergyman.

“Well,” continued the old man, paying  
no heed to the pious utterance of the di-  
vine, “if indigestion ensue, you will  
have given him a worse apple than you  
have given me,” and he munched con-  
tentedly the ribstone pippin he had just  
received in exchange for one copper  
penny of the realm.

“But payment is not limited by the penny given nor the apple received in exchange. A ribstone pippin is but a poor compensation for a base action, which in its effect, both upon him on whom it is committed and on him who commits it, makes us almost forget the apple altogether. For here evil is apparent in its two aspects. You are not made angry” (for the old woman was scarlet, and, paying no attention to what was said, expressed her feelings with a force and directness shocking to the clergyman) “by the loss of the apple, but by the baseness of the man’s action. He will, I doubt not, (despite my reverend friend’s wish to the contrary) enjoy the apple exceedingly, and he will perhaps enjoy yet more the success of his base act—and he will bear the stamp of his baseness upon his soul.”

Here, turning to the clergyman, he continued “You tell me he is young in deceit, well, maybe his conscience will

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awake, he will see the stain upon his soul and its removal will cost him many tears, much painful effort. In any case, however, he will pay for the apple its proper price, and he will also pay a just payment for his baseness."

## A MIRACLE.

**B**ROTHER Ambrose sat at his desk in the scriptorium working at his great golden copy of the Gospels, which the abbot, who now and again came and looked over his shoulder, had said should be to the glory of God and the monastery for ever.

It was spring-time, and through an open window came all the sweet breath of the young May, and through the soft fluttering of the new delicious lace-work of the trees filtered the silver clinking of the river below; there was a hint of hawthorn in the air too, and as Ambrose plied his wonderful pen on the creamy vellum, looking up at times to heave back his

shoulders and take a breath of those gentle outer influences, which, blending with the happy consciousness of the great initial which he had wrought but yesterday and which was still on the page before him splendid in purple and gold, filled his heart with a calm deep and sweet as the peace of God.

It was well too, he pondered, that all the page should not be so emblazoned, for the broad spaces of shining ebon made a season of rest in which his pleased soul could dwell in a happy contemplation of the work 'well done.'

It was like God's glory also, shining all the more brightly because the world was so dark. And, as his mind rippled on in this wise to itself, kenning little more of the words he wrote than to shape each sacred letter aright with reverent hand, why did his brow darken with a sudden pain, and his eyes fill with a fear, his pen forgotten? "So brightly because the world was so dark" he had said, and then

what were the words that were shaping themselves beneath his hand while the pious fancy still lingered with him, why should they seem to stand out with such a striking vehemence—those of all the verses his patience had transcribed that day—

*Euntes in mundum universum: predicate evangelium omni creature.\**

While, as he looked and looked, it seemed as though there was nought on the whole page save only that strait command, and that fair capital with all its purple and gold seemed fled away. The happy singing of the afternoon seemed to have ceased too, as he sat on in a grey dream. Indeed, the call for vespers arose without his awaking, and had not kind Father John, looking into the room as he passed down the stairs, shaken him by the shoulder, he had done penance for his forgetfulness. But, though he walked to the chapel and went through the sacred office, the same dream held him

\* Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.



all the time. At last in his cell he tossed sleepless for many hours, but near morning he slept, and lo ! Christ stood over him in a vision, and touching his arm bade him follow. So he uprose and presently stood by his side in a room he knew. It was the scriptorium. And Christ said, "Bring me thy gospel, Ambrose," and Ambrose brought it trembling. And the Lord opened and pointed with his finger, and again Ambrose read—*Euntes in mundum universum: predicate evangelium omni creature*. Thereon he awoke and wept bitterly, for he loved his fair craft passing well.

But, as morning came on with its happy birds, his heart arose, it seemed as if he had only fancied his dream, and he went into the fields. There surely he should lose the shadow. But, alas, no ! it came back to him more heavily than in his cell, for every spray of May-blossom, each quaintly perched little bird, called to mind how he had loved to note them for the

corners of his great book, and with the thought of that, came over and over again that strait command. Moreover, as his eyes rested on the dim line of the distance, a voice cried within him—"There lieth the city filled with sorrow and sin, what doest thou here living pleasantly in this valley?"

And he returned to his cell sad at heart, and at last when he must again sit at his great book he wrestled much with the spirit. But the spirit threw him ever.

As he looked upon the beautiful page—"Surely" he said "this is for God's glory also, his work fulfils itself in many ways, and this is my appointed task." And a voice said in his heart "*The lust of the eye, and the pride of the mind.*" And again it said—"Wouldst thou serve God as he willeth or but as thou desirest!" And he bowed his head and cried—"Mercy, O Lord! thou knowest I am thy servant." Then did the voice speak again exceeding sweetly and it said but one word.

“*Ambrose!*” it pleaded. “Amen! Lord, I come quickly” he made answer, and, raising his head, he closed the book, and going straightway to the abbot told him all, and also how he willed to go forth and preach.

But the abbot dissuaded him—“Hast thou thought, my son, how this may be an evil spirit that enticeth thee to thy damnation? for the devils have power to come even as the children of light; and the fame of thy art may have peradventure reached even unto Sathanas, who would fain put out so shining a candle on God’s altar.”

Thus spake the abbot of God’s glory, though he thought only of that of the monastery—which, after all, was God’s.

But Ambrose hearkened not to his words, and in time went forth, following the command. His great book was locked away, for none had skill like his, and the abbot hoped he might soon return and write it to the end.

But years went past, the brothers grew

greyer and some died, and Ambrose had not returned. The abbot deemed him dead of the plague long since.

Yet, one late afternoon, like that so long before when Ambrose had heard the call, a shepherd-lad came running toward the gate and told how he had come upon a friar, very old and feeble, who had fainted in the way hard by. Thereupon two of the brothers went forth, and lo! it was Ambrose.

So they carried him in with them and lay him upon a bed, and, when a cordial had brought back his speech, he told how after he had gone forth from them he had passed by God's command into many towns and cities, and preached the word and ministered to the sick, day by day, all the years; but at length knowing his end was nigh, he had prayed that he might come and lay his bones in the old home.

And, as he thus lay dying, the brothers came about him and besought his blessing, and the abbot forbore reproach, for, as he

looked on the worn but shining face, he thought—"maybe though our house hath lost an artist, it hath gained a saint."

The spring air came again into the room where Ambrose lay, the trees rustled and the river clinked below as of old, and as slowly he grew to take comfort in the sweet familiar influences, the love of past days awoke within him, and a yearning sprang up to look once again on his great unfinished gospel. So they brought it to his bed, but his hands might not wield it; therefore they opened the book before him and turned over page by page till they should come to the place where his hand had ceased and the fair unwritten vellum began. But lo! a strange thing—for they turned on and on and still fair writing followed, and at last, with growing wonder, they had reached the last page, and yet all was written and there was no unwritten page in all the book.

And, as they reached the end, Ambrose rose trembling on his pillow, and looked.

And lo! at the bottom of the page a great shining caught his eyes, wonderful letters of gold, and it was a colophon which said thus—

*Well done, good and faithful servant,  
enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

For a moment Ambrose gazed upon it in an awe of great joy, then, falling back upon his bed, he died, smiling.

And those who had stood round him, wonderstricken, fell upon their knees, and the abbot cried—"It is a miracle! the Lord hath blessed his servant. Let us pray."

But no man saw how the face of good Father John shone as a sacred dish of gold when the taper glorifies it, for he stood a little behind the others, and spake nought to any of his vigils above those pages, for his lost brother's sake, when all the monastery slept, and love had taught a cunning to his fingers no art could teach before.

"A miracle!" they cried, and Father John gainsayed them not.

## THE POET AND THE FISHMONGER.

ONE day a poet, who lived near Launceston, woke up with a bad cold in his head. He could not smell the honeysuckle in the window. This put him out of temper, for he used to say that smelling was neglected; and indeed it was by a poem on frankincense and myrrh he had become great. He was poor and so kept no servant. He went into his larder to get breakfast ready, but it was empty. He then felt in his pocket, but found there only a few coppers. "Never mind," he said, "I will have fish."

Now in the fishmarket of Launceston, among the sellers, there were a few pretty



wenches and many ugly old hags. The smell of the fish was very distasteful to the poet; but he was hungry, so off he went. When he got to the market, he was astonished to find it much pleasanter than usual. He thought a moment. "Ah," he said, "it is the cold, what a blessed visitation!" Then as he looked round he saw all the fishes lying on the marble slabs, which yesterday had been swimming in the deep sea. "Yes" he said, "This would have pleased Isaiah, the pike lies down by the minnow," shewing true poetic instinct by using fresh water fish for his illustration. Then he had a vision of the deep sea of yesterday, and saw all the fishes swimming there. And immediately the young wenches turned into mermaids, and the old women into sea hags, that made cunning snares, and caught, and disembowelled shining fish. But the mermaids wagged their tails and combed their hair, and the fish swam, and with shining fins kept

time to their singing. And one mermaid was fairer to see than all the others, and she had a sweeter voice; and the poet went up and spoke to her, and walked through the seaweed by her side, and he kissed her, for they were all alone. And when he awoke from his trance, he found himself indeed alone with a fair wench, that held two mackerel by a cord.

“Come home with me to breakfast,” said the poet.

“But my mother—” said she.

“Never mind your mother” said the poet: so she went with him. And he got out his frying pan, and they sat down by the kitchen table, and they cleaned and cooked the mackerel together, and then they went into the inner room, where they ate them for breakfast.

And the poet married the fish-seller the same day, and wrote a wonderful poem about it, which made him exceeding famous, and was read by the Queen on her throne. Whereof he sent a fair

printed copy, from the press of good Master Caxton, to his mother the fishwife, and she, in token of the union of her daughter the fish-seller with the pothry-monger, (as she used to call her son-in-law) and as an expression moreover of her own strong feelings on the occasion, for a wedding gift sent him three mackerel, wrapping them in the fair printed copy of his own poem which good Master Caxton had printed.

MORAL : True love knows no law.

HINC ILLAE LACRIMAE.

I HAD played at literature since I was as high as the dining-table, now I was to take it in earnest. So I rented chambers in a decayed quarter of the town, where they were cheapest, and having, in case of overflow, laid in vast stores of foolscap, a quart of ink and a gross of scribblers, I girded up my loins and "commenced author." But at the very outset I was beset by an interruption so inexplicable that, being a lonely man and having no one else to confide in, I must perforce make a confidante of the reader. It was the interruption of a sadness the like of which I have never heard or read, nay! nor witnessed in any melodrama.

It did not come upon me during the first week or two of my literary labours. Doubtless the novelty of my undertaking had some excitement in it to keep it at bay, besides I had a long article to write during that time, mood or no mood, and so I escaped, till, I suppose, about the third week.

During that, however, I undoubtedly came under its shadow. At first it manifested itself only in a sort of flat-champagniness of spirits, but then it was November and what wonder? Besides, if there are bad spirits, are there not also good spirits to be bought, which one can send like ferrets into the burrows of those gnawing melancholies. Such I felt it wise to employ, and for a day or two with success; but very soon I felt them slain within me, and the gnawing melancholies still gnawing on. Do what I would I could not shake the depression off. I tried American humour, but with no avail. I can show you any day my copy of

Mark Twain, as crumpled and swollen as though it had been left out on the garden seat all night in the rain—with my tears. For indeed it came at last to that.

At first it had been a dullness, then a gentle melancholy not unlike a fashionable preacher's, but soon all day long (at intervals of about a quarter of an hour) great tearful thoughts kept coming to me and striking on my heart, just as those long bramble shoots strike one on the face of a wet morning and deposit their pearly freightage down the interstices of the collar and thence into the warm places of the chest and back. Chords of unimagined pathos, great pangs of shuddering fatefulness were continually resolving me into a dew, and so fast would my tears flow at times, that my glass would be actually fuller after I had drunk from it than before. I need hardly say that I was greatly concerned for the cause of a malady wild and strange as this will, I am sure, appear to the reader. I naturally

blamed my health, and called in my confidential doctor ; but he assured me that I had nothing to fear on that score, really he couldn't observe anything at all wrong with me, however—he would give me a small prescription.

I tried several patent tonics, but I wrote no testimonials. At last I was becoming desperate, when the idea struck me that possibly the cause might be outside myself, might, in fact, be somehow connected with the room. The rent was ridiculously low. I had thought that before. Yes ! that was it surely. It came of some mysterious subtle haunting—no vulgar bogie, but the latest refinement of ghostly art. Some terrible unearthly sorrow had perhaps found its theatre in that room, some tragic love done battle with fate, some—but so fascinated did I at once become with the idea that I wrote three successful “shilling sorrows” (may I call them ?) one after another in a conjectural quest of that tearful unknown. However, the

excitement of 'creation,' which had dried my tears for awhile, subsiding, and no sign coming from 'the silent place,' my sadness rolled back on me once again like a Dead Sea, and I felt there was no other course than to give up the rooms, leaving the mystery unexplained.

However, a night or two before doing that, my lamp began to show signs of failing, and my paraffin-can was empty. So I went along the landing to the keeper's lodging, on the errand of the foolish virgins. The keeper's wife and I had struck up a sort of acquaintance, and I stood in her kitchen chatting a moment while she filled my can. Just then my eye caught sight of a little bookshelf I had not noticed before, and as there were one or two volumes with a rather distinctive appearance, I went across to look at them. It was a thin book in a very strange binding that had most attracted me and I took it down.

"Ah!" said Mrs. Keeper "the poor



young fellow who wrote that used to live here, he gave it me when he went away. Why, yes! he used to be in your rooms, to be sure. Poor young fellow, what was his trouble I don't know"—(I pricked up my ears)—"but certainly *I* never saw any one so miserable looking in *my* life. I've heard them poems are thought a lot of by London folk, but they're a bit too melancholy like for me, sir!"

I clutched open the volume to look at the title. It was "SOUL-SOB, by Pessimus Potts"!

Now do you understand?

## TINDERHOOK.

JONES was as secret as the grave, but he was an old man and had (as I have since learned) a fatal habit of talking in his sleep. He had recently married (which subsequent events proved to be the one great mistake of his existence) a young wife; and very early in the ensuing year, from her strange behaviour when I visited his house, I became convinced that he had in some way made known to her, in his sleep as I firmly believe, a fact in my own early life, which he, of all men living, alone knew, and which it was of vital importance to me should remain buried in oblivion: and not only this—but further, that she had communicated her

discovery to her five young sisters, then on a visit to herself and husband, who all giggled, and then, putting their fingers on their lips, turned pale, as often as I came into their presence. There was no use in killing Jones; so I simply had a notice, HOUSE TO BE SOLD, put up in the garden, told Mrs. Robinson to pack up all our belongings, and chartered a ship for the North Pole, which I provisioned, and taking my five sturdy sons as crew, set sail from Liverpool a year or two ago on the 31st of January.

As will be readily surmised, we met with many surprising adventures, and passed by many uninhabited countries on the voyage, which will not be found in any map issued before the day on which we set sail. Of course, in the end we suffered shipwreck, on a desert island, bereft of all our belongings except a tinder box and a few fish hooks, having removed our clothes when the ship was fast filling with water, to insure the preservation of

our lives. How we provided ourselves with suitable clothing, caught and cooked fish daily, built a house; how in short the neat gabled residence with its surrounding vegetable garden and well stocked farm-yard, came into existence under the combined efforts of Mrs. Robinson, our five boys and the writer, it would be tedious to relate; how in fine we established the private wire to Mr. Septimus Robinson, my brother, in Bombay, through which this letter has been transmitted, we may also leave unnoticed, since we hope before long to publish a full account in book form.

By the indiscretion of his wife's youngest sister, Hopeful, then thirteen years of age, my secret was made known, and Jones being implicated, was forced to leave England. Taking Mrs. Jones and her five orphan sisters (the eldest, Honoria, having just completed her eighteenth year), with him, he joined my brother Septimus in Bombay; where,

having successfully escaped the unpleasant consequences of Hopeful's venial indiscretion, he was, on leaving the ship, stung on the left foot by a scorpion, and the wound mortifying and acute septicæmia setting in, died within a week after landing. His wife and her five sisters were inconsolable ; and what was worse, they were penniless. Septimus's income, though considerable, was quite incommensurate with the bare necessities of six English ladies, bred up in the utmost refinement, and from the cradle accustomed to every luxury. They had no one to look to ; in a word they were starving. When I heard of their sad plight, it did not take me five minutes to decide on the course of action I should adopt. They and the late lamented Jones had, as I have before indicated, by becoming the recipients of the fatal secret, been the cause of all my subsequent good fortune, such as I should have never otherwise attained. My five boys were all of a marriageable age, there

were no women in Tinderhook, there were no laws. Brazen, our eldest born had loved Honoria from the cradle, and Hope and Hopeful had ever eaten their bread and milk out of the same bowl, nor were the two intermediate trios less devotedly one. True, there was still Mrs. Jones, an inconsolable widow. But, as I have said, in Tinderhook there are *no laws*; nor, as long as the government of this (continent or island we have not yet been able to determine with certainty) remains in my hands, shall there be any. My duty was plain; plain to me, but that it may be made plain to the reader also, I must at this point make a short digression.

Tinderhook, where we now live, is my own absolute possession, and therefore I need fear no consequences from my now confirming the story of my origin, which I was from the first convinced would be, and have since received indisputable testimony has been, spread abroad in my own country.

My grandfather, an Englishman born, early in life had migrated West, and their peculiar doctrines accommodating themselves to his own lines of thought, he entered the Mormon fraternity, and took up his abode in the Salt Lake City.

Consistent with his avowed belief, he took to himself two wives, and by them had a considerable family, of which my father was one; who in his turn moulded by his early surroundings, five years before the death of his first wife and two before the birth of her last child, fell in love with and married my mother (then, I am told, a beautiful girl), the only daughter of one of the most wealthy and influential magistrates of the Salt Lake City. I was the only offspring of this union, my mother dying at the time of my birth from natural causes. But since the time of my grandfather, the Mormon constitution had undergone great changes, and the pure state of morality of his day, which with the plurality of wives acted so beneficially

upon the health of the Mormon constitution (especially upon the women, who being less tied by the duties of the nursery than ladies of less fortunate communities, had much leisure to pursue their own trains of thought), all this was a thing of the past.

In consequence of these changes, as I grew up, finding my life in the Salt Lake City wholly uncongenial, I made my escape and emigrated to England. Here, though a total stranger, yet with a passable fortune, I succeeded beyond my hopes. As a physician I gained a high repute, and in this I carried out creditably the family tradition. I was offered a baronetcy, but declined. But while still young, I fell in love with a lady of great beauty, whom I had rescued from what would, if neglected, have certainly proved a fatal case of pernicious anæmia; and, having gained the consent of her father and herself to the union, married her. Neither she nor her father knew the circumstances of my birth;



and I had never divulged them. If known, I reasoned, English law would assuredly brand me as illegitimate, I should be shunned, should perhaps lose my practice, my wife, my happiness! Not a soul in England knew me, therefore I said nothing.

For the first twenty years and upwards of our wedded life all went well; and would have continued to do so, had not my old friend and preceptor at the medical college in Utah, Jones, like myself, displeased with the innovations brought into the Salt Lake City about the time of my departure, a very few months afterwards likewise betaken himself to England, and started practice as surgeon in Edinburgh, where he after some years established a good position. Later he migrated to London, where one day he met me—I remember the day well—in Piccadilly, a May evening.

We had parted when I was yet in my boyhood, we met men; yet each knew the other in an instant, “Robinson!”

“Jones!” That night we dined together at the Galen club, and afterwards recounted our several experiences of the past twenty years, since we had left the place of our birth. We agreed in condemning the present constitution of the Mormon state, especially its view of wedlock. I had been married some fifteen years before meeting with Jones, but he had been so displeased with the peculiar phases of the human alliance of the sexes in Utah, that he was not only still a bachelor, but had I learned solemnly vowed to remain so till the day of his death. “Such,” he said “is my determination, but though I have selected a single life for myself, I am neither misogynist nor misogynist, and I congratulate you, Robinson, upon your happy and fruitful union, with one of whose virtue, beauty and goodness, I have heard not from your lips alone. Her health Robinson!” and he poured out two bumpers of the '64 Heidseck, for which the cellars of

the Galen club are so deservedly famous. I cordially responded. "Moreover," he went on, "you are right to keep your incognito. No good purpose would be accomplished though much obvious harm ensue, on its divulgation—even to a wife. On this subject we are dumb, we have forgotten!"

Mutual congratulations followed, and Jones was charmed with my wife beyond report when I presented him next day; nor was she less favourably impressed by the interview. By a fortunate coincidence I found that Jones's residence lay not far distant from our own, and thus was the old happy intercourse of our boyhood renewed.

Ten years went by, and as Jones saw more and more of our conjugal felicity, he became, I noticed, less and less averse to the society of spinsters; and where they were young, virtuous and beautiful, as were the Misses Smith, and especially the eldest (the Mrs. Jones of the future, to

whom we have already alluded), he was constant and devoted in his attentions. At length, seeing how matters stood between Jones and Augusta, I for the first time since the night of our meeting in Piccadilly, reverted to our conversation upon that evening and asked Jones if he was still as devoted to a single life as upon that occasion. "Robinson," he replied "I am neither misogynist nor misogamist, and it is foolish to be bound by an idle oath. As St. Paul says, (and we doctors know it as well as he) *it is not good for man to be-alone!* Such was the courtship of Jones—happy in its inception, but, to him, fatal in its consequences.

It was but a month from the union of Jones and Augusta, that I discovered the secret of my birth to be no longer a secret, and, recalling the words of my friend, *not even to a wife*, took prompt action, as I have described, and left Europe for ever.

On all other topics since our union there had been the most implicit con-

fidence and mutual trust between Mrs. Robinson and myself: and when the *North Pole* (so was our ship christened) had once weighed anchor, and the line of the Liverpool docks was fast fading from sight (we were standing on the main deck looking to the land of our affections, but I could not say of our birth, which we might not, and I fervently hoped should not, ever behold again, and tears were pouring from the eyes of my Susanna, nor were mine dry), I communicated to her the one fact of my life I had hitherto kept secret from her, the story of my birth in the Salt Lake City and Mormon origin. My wife received this disclosure equably, understanding the cogent reasons which had made me keep secret from her for twenty years that which I now openly declared. But she was strongly impressed with the advantage which must accrue to women whose life has a free outlook beyond the limits of the nursery and the education and settlement of their daugh-

ters, and raised many points on the question of women's education, such as I have heard are now being eagerly discussed in the old country, though I cannot credit the report that women have already gained admission to the principal universities of Europe, still less that they have in the past few years carried away the chief classical and mathematical honours at Cambridge.

But when I learned the unhappy fate of my old friend Jones, and the wretched condition of the survivors, as I have already described, my duty was plain, but it was at the immediate suggestion of *my wife* that I touched the electric bell in our telegraph office at Tinderhook, thus calling the attention of Septimus's clerk in Bombay, and despatched an offer of marriage to Mrs. Jones. Brazen made a like communication to Honoria; three other telegrams of similar import were despatched; a sixth being sent by Hope to Hopeful. Three minutes passed in

breathless expectancy. Then the bell sounded! The first five messages each contained only a simple affirmative. In the last, from Hopeful, were added two words—*till death*.

All seven at Tinderhook are now actively making preparations for the advent of the ladies, and in the absence of church and clergyman in devising a marriage ceremony suitable to the somewhat unusual conditions of our life. The subject since the receipt of the above-mentioned telegrams has been thoroughly discussed and a solution at last found in the offer of my wife, who more eagerly than any other of our party looks forward to the arrival of the ladies to take upon her the somewhat arduous office of clergyman on the occasion, when she will not only unite the writer with his newly affianced, but will officiate also in the five other cases.

As I do not wish to lay our sequestered and beautiful retreat open to the English tourist, I refrain from detailing the



arrangements made by my brother Septimus for the safe convoy of our six brides; sufficient to say that they are expected before the moon is full, and on the day following their arrival our felicity will be completed.

Mrs. Robinson has had the ordering and cooking of the wedding breakfast. Almonds, raisins and sugar grow here in great abundance, and have enabled her to manufacture a cake, beautifully contrived in six divisions, which would do no discredit to the best London confectioner. "We shall sit down thirteen, my love," she says in her pleasant way.

How little can we forecast the future! I had thought all was lost when I had learned that Jones had divulged my secret to his Augusta. Yet his doing so has resulted in all our present happiness! How truly does Horace say—*quid sit futurum cras, fuge quaerere!*



## THE MONK.

**I**N the reign of Edward the Confessor there lived a young monk that from his childhood had been strangely drawn to the love of the Virgin, and had set himself to become a priest. He had always obeyed his father and mother, had bowed down to no idol, had given alms freely and been chary of his desires. Yet, one night as he came from mass to his cell a devil met him, and, as he saw the fiend's burning eye upon him, his hand grew numb so that he could not hold his rosary. Moreover, he felt himself constrained to follow the devil, which led him out at the postern, and through the court-yard. He was missed next day.

A black lake lay by the roadside hardby, and as none could pierce its obscure water with his eye, nor had ever been able to sound its depth with a plummet, it was believed that he must have fallen into this lake and be even then lying under the water drowned. Nor did they credit the wild story of his departure as narrated to them by two of the brethren, who pretended to have been eyewitnesses of his terrible meeting with the devil.

After many years, he was seen one night at mass, and thereafter confirmed the brethren of his meeting with the devil, who, he told them, had taken him at an unwatchful moment and so gained power over his soul. The monk had been led by the devil into a pleasant country and had there lived delicately, nor had he longer any wish for the things of the church, nor reluctance to take of the many delights offered. It seemed to him that he had re-entered Eden, had eaten of the tree of knowledge at the serpent's

bidding, and had found the devil as an angel of light and himself indeed as a god. But the voice of Jehovah had at length called to him and he had become aware of his woeful plight. He had told the devil forthwith that he would return, but the devil had replied that to do so was impossible. His reason had, however, returned, he would no longer taste of the satanic fruit, and at length engaged to serve the fiend for seven years, then to go free. The time passed in much tribulation, for the devil scoffed at his repentance and tempted him continually with pleasant meat and drink, and beset him with torment all the day and gave him pain as his bedfellow at night. The seven years ended, he was come back repentant.

The abbot censured him for his relapse, but his censure was mixt with pity and he cried—"Verily, O Blessed Virgin, hath this man's sin against thee been great, yet his punishment hath been greater.

Receive him again therefore into thy favour, we beseech thee." Then the choir sang vespers and on the morrow the monk went on pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre.

Years passed, the monk's zeal for the church was unremitting, nor did there appear any taint upon him of his sin. He was only more sombre of countenance and more rigid in habit. At length the abbot died, and with one accord this monk was called upon to take his place.

But on the first night of his instalment, after vespers, as he went to his cell, the devil again met him, and the same two monks who had given witness of him fourteen years back averred that they saw him led by the fiend through the courtyard and over the meadow, past the dark lake, into the firwood beyond, wringing his hands.

## DAVID AND JONATHAN.

**T**WO fishermen of Zealand at the end of last century, it is said, agreed to put together their resources that they might thus by mutual aid better maintain their respective families. First they went together with axes into the forest and felled a pine tree. This they cut into planks with saws, and from these, with great care, constructed a boat. After they had put together their nets, and had supplied their boat with bait and provisions, they made feast together and their wives came and drank to the health of the two fishermen and to the success of their enterprise. All the village turned out at the embarkation, and the old men stand-

ing on the shore said that it was well, for the love of these two men was as that of Jonathan and David.

For a time after leaving land all went happily, but at length the two men fell out. The elder was wise and had supplied most of the money to buy what they had needed, but he would not work, and though by trade a fisherman and justly reputed to be a great authority upon all subjects connected with hook or net, his craft had never been positively known to catch a single fish. He now sat idle in the stern of the boat and upbraided his fellow for his pitiful ignorance of seamanship, for the boat made no progress, but only turned round and round when he used his one oar, and when he took his partner's oar as well the boat was so heavy that it would not move at all. Seeing how matters were, the elder took from his carpenter's bag a sharp awl, and drave holes with much skill and neatness through the bottom of the boat, which

soon filled with water and sank down to the bottom of the sea.

The next week the bodies of the two men were washed ashore, fast locked in each other's arms. Their wives wept and and grieved sorely and there was much lamentation through the village. They were buried by public subscription in the same tomb, and over it was raised a handsome marble monument, on which, at the suggestion of the old men and with the unanimous approbation of all, was engraved—

“David and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in death they were not divided.”

## THAT FACE!

MURRAY wanted very much to paint my portrait.

“All right, name a time—but an easy pose, mind, and plenty of chocolate,” for I am as fond of chocolate as Sandra Belloni.

On Tuesday afternoon at 3 prompt I was at the studio.

“Tea and a cigarette?” whispered Murray about five. “Blessed, blessed thought! O yes! dear Murray!”

But the studio was out of sugar, so Murray must needs slip round to a neighbouring grocer. Sweet is a yawn and a stretch in bed of a morning, but sit for your portrait, reader, it is sweeter then at



five o'clock. A yawn and a stretch, then a 'potter' here and there about the place looking at this and that; impertinently prying into canvasses resting awhile face to the wall—a baby-girl a la 'Cherry Ripe,' a mayor with civic chain (Poor Murray!) and at last a woman's face—  
Great God!

No more sitting that day, or rather nothing but that in a shuddering terrified heap. I couldn't tell him. I must go home.

"Forgive me, old man. A very strange and awful thing has happened to me. Don't ask me more now. Perhaps I can tell you all again."

Three days passed by during which I neither ate nor slept. I must see *it* once more. Murray started as at a ghost when he opened the door. I was so changed.

"Murray! Murray! *that face*. O tell me of that face!"

Why, bless me, it was only the face of a pretty young model of his, innocent and

harmless enough. Why, what *was* the matter?

"O but I must see her! This screen, Murray, when does she come again?—I will watch here. O don't refuse me."

"Certainly, nothing easier. But really what is the matter, old man?"

"No! no! don't ask me, O don't ask me."

Next day she was to be at the studio. I walked about the room nearly all that night and then fell into a weary stupor till close on the appointed time. But I was not late—nor was she. *She!* SHE! for, O Heaven, explain it as you will, SHE it was—*that face* was MY OWN DEAD WIFE!

## A TALE OF TRUE LOVE.

THERE came to live in a certain old fashioned village in Normandy, about the same time, a man and woman that had not met before. He was a *savant* and put learning far above all other attainments or perfections. She was young and of great beauty, and could not see ugliness without extreme pain.

These two being brought together were made known to each other: he found she had no brain and she saw him to be very ugly. Indeed he had never met anyone so dull, nor she beheld any countenance so displeasing. The extremity of their mutual dislike made them not hate but pity each other. “How sad to be so

dull!" he thought as he looked at her, tears coming into his eyes. "Ah" she thought "he cries because he is so hideous, poor man! no wonder." "Yes," thought he in turn, looking at her sorrowful countenance, "She knows her stupidity and grieves over it: I should not have thought she had such acuteness." All the other people in the room one by one ceased talking as they saw the savant and the beautiful lady each intently surveying the other's face with tears rolling down their cheeks. The hostess, the mother of the lady and pupil of the *savant*, marshalled her guests into the conservatory, for she had brought these two together of set purpose. A long silence followed, only broken by the alternate splash of their tears as they fell on the floor. Then both their mouths opened at once. "How sad you must be, I *am* sorry for you." Thus they made love.

That night the beautiful lady told her mother she had promised to marry the

*savant* to comfort him because he was so ugly, and he on the following day, with tears in his eyes, that he was to wed with her daughter. "She is so dull, poor thing," said he. When they were married they still continued to pity each other but did not know that they were each pitied also by the other. "Her children," thought he "will be wise." "His children," she thought "will be beautiful." But their children, of whom they had ten, five sons and five daughters, were neither beautiful nor wise.

## MY MAD POET.

I HAD been paying a call or two during the afternoon and returned to my rooms in the deepening November twilight. My mind had been full as I came along of a letter which I was somewhat anxiously expecting at that time, and as I opened the door, joy! it scraped along with it something that made a papery sound upon the floor. I dived down to pick it up. It *was* the letter. As the fire was flickering cheerfully across the room, I could not wait for the lamp, so tearing open my letter, I knelt down in front of the grate, and read it there. Ah, that was well! Another read with the lamplight! But as I turned from the fire

to throw off my greatcoat, my heart gave a great bound, it was with difficulty that I kept from crying out, for there was someone sitting in my armchair—a flash from the fire lit up his whole form.

“Who are you?” I cried, hardly knowing what I said.

“I—don’t know” was the odd answer in a sweet hollow voice.

“How did you come in here?”

“Through the door.”

Yes, in my haste to read my letter I had left it open.

I sprang up to shut it—strangely enough—thus locking myself in with my odd visitor. As I turned to him again he was looking at, rather yearning, at me with his great eyes.

“What do you want with me?” I blurted out.

“Want! Love, Fame, and you can at least give me one. O! don’t be like the world outside there” he continued, “don’t be cruel and suspicious as they are, *you*

are a *Poet*! Yes, yes, you are. I heard one sneer it after you as I passed across the square, and I would have struck him, but I feared to miss you. Yes, you are a poet, for men scoff at you. That's enough, they only scoff at poets. Buy and bargain, lie and cheat, drink and whore, do ought else you will and the world is warm, you have fellows, but dream, *dream*, and you are alone in the east wind, scoffed, spurned, spit upon—of less account than the meanest clod that slaves. O yes, say you are a poet. Many a time have I seen you pass by, and I felt you must be, there was dream on your face, love in your eye; I longed to speak to you, to cry out 'my Brother!' but I was afraid lest, after all, you should be of the world too. But you are not, say you are not,—say that I have found a friend at last, that I need no longer be always alone."

"A friend indeed, if I may be—but come, sit down. Let us talk quietly. You write poems?"



“Yes!”

“Have you any with you that I may read?”

“Yes, here!” and he handed me a thick MS. book. I opened it at the first page and read the first poem. It had obvious blemishes, but it struck me. I turned to him to find his gaze hanging on me as though life were in the balance and mine the scales.

“Find what faults you will. Only say I *am* a poet—say that. O, am I?” he had cried before I could speak.

“Be content then” I answered “for you are that.”

“A—poet? O say the word itself.”

“Yes, then, a poet.”

He sighed with a great content, such a sigh as a woman’s when the first great kiss of love has just been kissed—“A Poet!” Then, hastily rising, “Good-night—I cannot bear more now. A Poet! O think of it—a Poet! I cannot help the tears, I must hide where they can freely fall and I

will count each one as a little gold coin of joy. O God bless you, goodbye—I may come again?—Goodbye. A Poet—O! A Poet!” and he was gone.

Need I say that the effect of so unusual a visit did not subside that night? The strange lad had some arresting magic of personality that made his wild words seem no more strange than the wild words people come and speak to us in dreams.

After the first surprise, I no longer found him strange. He was a harmony, and held his own congruity within him. He brought his own atmosphere and made one see him as he shone therein, not as he might show in the dry depolarising air of the work-a-day town.

So may be explained the fact that I was not so sagacious as the reader, to whom his words must come without any such atmosphere and who, of course,—with the slight hint of the title—has already guessed my visitor's trouble; for which madness is really too coarse a word, except it be

used in the old sense of an inspired madness—for indeed ‘my mad poet’ was only so by a hair-breadth, by that threadlike brink whence genius swings over the gulf, that debateable land which it and madness alike inhabit. The first positive hint I had that he sometimes crossed the border was when he came again in a week’s time.

By then I had read through his book, and among his verse, which was as derivative as that of young poets generally is, I came across—Shelley’s *Ode to the West Wind*.

At first I thought it had been copied there as in a common-place book, but on looking close I found several alterations in it that seemed to come of a sort of creative fermentation,—such as might have arisen perhaps from the unconscious efforts of the mind to fill up blanks which memory had not succeeded in retaining; then by some caprice, forgetting the original and claiming the whole for its own.

I wondered about it, and on his coming to see me a second time asked him if he didn't use the volume as a common-place book too.

"O no!" he answered, "all is my own."

"But look here," I said "this is surely from Shelley."

He seemed a little troubled and answered slowly, as one trying to seize a slipping memory.

"Yes—it—is—Shelley," and then, with a curious rapid gesture, as if suddenly making up his mind, "but it is mine too—Shelley's and mine."

"How can that be?" I said.

"But it is true—I don't know how. Shelley wrote it and I wrote it—he no more than I. You don't think I would copy it in there, if it were his only, do you?"

Yes! it is strange, but it is by both of us."

It was no use talking to him. I looked and wondered. There was something strange, but I soon came to understand all.

A few nights after this an old body in a breathless state came knocking at my door. She proved to be his landlady and had been sent by him to bring me at once. He was dying, she said.

On being shown into his room it was no little shock to me to find him sitting in shirt and trousers upon his bed, which, and all the floor, was littered with reams of torn manuscript. His eyes were wild and his body trembled, but he seemed quite collected in mind. The hard light of a naked gas jet filled the room.

“Ah, you have come. I wanted to say goodbye. I am dying.”

“But what is the matter?”

For answer he held up a little medicine bottle, with a strange smile. It was labelled “poison” and empty.

I was too staggered to speak.

“It was best,” he said after a moment, “the battle was too long. I could never have worn the crown, but now I may sit at their feet. Don’t be unhappy. You

gave me the one great moment of my whole life. I could never have been so happy again. Goodbye. Sit by me."

Then suddenly, after a long pause—"I feel dizzy. Hold me," and he fainted in my arms.

I had sent the old woman for a doctor on my arrival, but he came too late. "My mad poet" was already sitting at their feet.

*"Illuc unde negant redire quenquam."*

THEY were bent on a long and perilous voyage, none had ever returned from the country whither they were bound, it was not even certain that any had ever reached it. Necessity compelled them to depart and their hearts failed them as they left the shore. Unable to bear the hardships that they must meet alone, they took with them Hope. But the sweet and wonderful singing whereby she had cheered their hearts in the tavern on the quay, as the land faded from their sight, died away, and, as the sky darkened, changed to a pitiful whimper. And her fearful shriek as they passed between icebergs and the storm

rent their sails and tore away the rudder from the ship, chilled their hearts.

Then were they wroth and as one man advanced to where Hope stood shrieking and seized and cast her headlong, and even as the whale swallowed Jonah so did the sea take her from their sight. Nor did they ever behold her again, but alone and rudderless as they now were, they thought no longer of the land whither they were bound, and when at length the ship struck against a sunken rock no shriek was there uttered as before, but they manfully rigged the ship's boat, saying "we can but die."

And now after long time, it is said, they are still voyaging toward that land and that song is not altogether hushed among them and that in due time their anchor will be dropped in that eternal harbour.











